

POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI)

EMPHASIS TRACK

2022-2023 Training Year



Washington DC VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street, NW
Washington DC, 20422
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SMI Postdoctoral Fellowship Experience Overview

Postdoctoral fellows in the Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Fellowship Track have an opportunity to work with Veterans in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC), which is an intensive outpatient skills building program, and on the acute inpatient psychiatry unit (of note, the majority of a fellow's time is devoted engagement in services in the PRRC). Staff in the PRRC and on the inpatient psychiatric unit provide treatment to Veterans who are diagnosed with a serious mental illness (e.g., Schizophrenia, Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, and Anxiety Disorders, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and experience significant functional impairment. Both the PRRC and inpatient Veteran population is diverse in race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and cognitive/physical functioning. Programming is curriculum-based and specifically designed to teach the requisite skills that are necessary for defining and realizing Veterans' self-chosen roles and goals in all domains of health and life. Recovery-focused approaches are respectful of the Veteran as an individual rather than focusing solely on a problem, diagnosis, or set of symptoms. Services provided are individualized, person-centered, strength-based, and promote hope, responsibility, and respect.

The PRRC is staffed by three psychologists, four nurse case managers, three peer support specialists, one social worker, and one recreation therapist. The inpatient unit is staffed primarily by psychiatrists, psychiatry residents, and nurses. Typically, between four and six psychology practicum students complete a year-long, 16 hour per week externship in the PRRC and on the inpatient unit. Also, typically up to two to four psychology interns, during their training year, complete a 4-month rotation, 12 hour (1/2 rotation) or 24 hour (full rotation) per week rotation in PRRC and on the inpatient unit.

Applicants interested in applying for the SMI emphasis track should express a specific interest in psychiatric rehabilitation and recovery-oriented therapeutic care. Fellows, at the beginning of their training year, work closely with their PRRC clinical supervisors – Drs. Galgay and Phalen – and Dr. Zaveri (PRRC Program Director), and Dr. Squires (Director of Psychology Training Programs) to develop an individualized training plan that meets their training needs and interests. The SMI fellowship is primarily clinically-focused; however, during the fellowship, a fellow is allotted 20% (i.e. 8 hours per week) of their time to develop program evaluation/program development and/or research initiatives.

PRRC Psychology Supervisors

Dr. Corinne Galgay: PRRC Staff Psychologist

Dr. Peter Phalen: PRRC Staff Psychologist

Dr. Parin Zaveri: PRRC Program Director

2021-2022 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Chantal Bushelle

Graduate Program: University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology

Internship Site: UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Dr. Naomi Stahl

Graduate Program: American University

Internship Site: VA Palo Alto Health Care System

2020-2021 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Caitlin Gaske

Graduate Program: The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

Internship Site: Veterans Affairs Maryland Health Care System (VAMHCS)

Current Employment: PRRC Program Director – Jesse Brown VA Medical Center

Dr. Lilli Salky

Graduate Program: Loyola University

Internship Site: Washington D.C. VAMC

Current Employment: Staff Psychologist: Trauma Services Program, Washington DC VAMC

2019-2020 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Kristen Keefe

Graduate Program: Clark University

Internship Site: Yale Doctoral Internship in Clinical & Community Psychology - Adult Community Mental Health Track

Current Employment: Private Practice in the Washington DC area and staff psychologist and at a state mental health hospital in Maryland.

Dr. Lauren Rothstein

Graduate Program: American University

Internship Site: West Palm Beach VAMC

Current Employment: Staff Psychologist: Trauma Services Program, Washington DC VAMC

2018-2019 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Corinne Galgay

Graduate Program: Teachers College, Columbia University

Internship Site: Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital

Current employment: Staff Psychologist: Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC), Washington DC VAMC

Dr. Julie Rones

Graduate Program: Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University

Internship Site: Washington DC VAMC

Current employment: Staff Psychologist: Mental Health Clinic Psychologist; and Evidence Based Psychotherapy Coordinator, Washington DC VAMC

2017-2018 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Scott Levson

Graduate Program: Chestnut Hill College

Internship Site: VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

Current employment: Staff Psychologist: Polytrauma Clinic, Washington DC VAMC

Dr. Jeremy Steglitz

Graduate Program: Northwestern University

Internship Site: Mount Sinai St Luke's and West Hospitals

Current Employment: Private practice in the Washington, DC area

2016-2017 Postdoctoral Fellows

Dr. Michael Greenfield

Graduate Program: American University
Internship Site: Miami Veteran Affairs Healthcare System
Current Employment: Local Recovery Coordinator, Washington DC VAMC.

Dr. Nick Uram

Graduate Program: Chatham University
Internship Site: West Palm Beach VAMC
Current Employment: Lexington Park, MD Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic

Clinical Opportunities

SMI emphasis Fellows have the opportunity to receive supervision from staff psychologists who have received intensive VA training, consultation, and certification in a variety of evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs) (see http://vaww.mentalhealth.va.gov/ebp/programs_protocols.asp for national EBP training initiatives currently endorsed by VA). Specifically, postdoctoral fellows will have the opportunity to receive supervision and training in evidence-based psychotherapies for Veterans presenting with symptoms associated with trauma (Cognitive Processing Therapy), depression (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy), serious mental illness (Social Skills Training, Behavioral Family Therapy, Illness Management and Recovery), Borderline Personality Disorder (Dialectical Behavior Therapy), relationship and family distress (Integrated Behavioral Couples Therapy), and motivation/behavioral health concerns (Problem Solving Training, Motivational Interviewing, Chronic Behavior Therapy for Chronic Pain, and Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Insomnia). Moreover, fellows will have the opportunity to implement interventions from Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychosis and Skills Training in Affect and Interpersonal Regulation. Because a majority of Veterans who present for mental health treatment experience suicidality, fellows will have the extensive opportunities to develop their suicide assessment skills by regularly completing suicide assessment measures (e.g., Columbia- Suicide Severity Rating Scale and the VA Comprehensive Suicide Risk Evaluation) and personalized safety plans, and develop their clinical skills in managing suicidality by using techniques from the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality and Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Suicide Prevention theoretical frameworks.

PRRC staff psychologists are trained as Master Trainers in Problem Solving Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Chronic Pain, and Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Suicide Prevention and, as such, postdoctoral fellows may have the opportunity to engage in further specialized training in any of these evidence-based psychotherapies; opportunities may also be available for fellows to receive specialized training in additional evidence-based psychotherapy, including Cognitive Processing Therapy and Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Specialized training consists of attending a 3-day workshop on the selected evidence-based psychotherapy and, then, for up to six months, attending weekly 60- to 90-minute consultation meetings with other consultees and the Master Trainer. Consultation meetings consist of reviewing audiotaped individual and/or group therapy sessions to ensure treatment fidelity, reading and discussing book chapters and/or articles related to the chosen evidence-based psychotherapy, and collaborating and providing feedback to other consultees regarding their clinical work. Upon successful completion of the workshop and consultation process, fellows will be eligible, if they remain at VA post-fellowship, to complete an equivalency application to receive VA provider status for the selected evidence-based psychotherapy.

Postdoctoral fellows are also granted the opportunity to join the Dialectical Behavior Therapy Consultation Team (DBT-CT) as part of the Washington DC VAMC full-model DBT program (of note, both Drs. Galgay and Phalen are actively involved on the DBT-CT). Fellows who are interested in this opportunity will join the team as a fellow clinician, providing both group and individual DBT treatment. The DBT full-model program includes weekly 1.5 hour long group therapy sessions, and fellows are invited to co-lead these

groups with another trainee or provider in order to gain experience with this modality. In addition, you will also be referred a caseload of individual therapy clients and have the opportunity to work with these Veterans over the course of the 6 months. Furthermore, fellow attend 1 hour weekly consultation team meetings where staff process group dynamics, discuss programmatic and administrative changes, provide empathic support and validation, gain support through consultation and discussion of Veteran and staff needs, review screenings and therapy interfering behaviors, and assess for risk factors.

Currently, postdoctoral fellows have the opportunity to co-facilitate the following groups in PRRC and/or the inpatient unit:

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Anger Management
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Anxiety
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Depression
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychosis
- Cultural Advancement and Racial Empowerment
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills
- Ending Self-Stigma for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Illness Management and Recovery
- Mindfulness
- Men's Group
- Skills Training in Affect and Interpersonal Regulation
- Self-Compassion
- Suicide Prevention Group
- Road to Recovery
- Women's Group

Of note, fellows are also strongly encouraged to develop their own groups in either the PRRC and/or on the inpatient unit.

In addition to the opportunity to develop their group facilitation skills, postdoctoral fellows have the opportunity to engage in individual therapy in the PRRC. In PRRC, individual psychotherapy is time-limited (i.e. up to 8-10 sessions in the PRRC) and focused on developing coping skills that target the Veteran's self-identified mental health symptoms.

Although postdoctoral fellows do not generally complete comprehensive psychological assessments as part of the fellowship, the regular use of assessment measures – such as the Beck Depression Inventory – II (BDI-II), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), and PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) – are administered by fellows to evaluate a Veteran's treatment progress in individual psychotherapy. Moreover, there may be an opportunity to become familiar with administering specific recovery-oriented psychological measures – such as the Recovery Assessment Scale (RAS), Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) Scales, Stages of Recovery Instrument (STORI), Recovery Process Inventory (RPI), and the Values In Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths– to measure a Veteran's progress towards their mental health recovery. In addition, fellows can conduct comprehensive suicide assessments using the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) approach.

Fellows also have the opportunity to participate in our NEPEC program evaluation. This national initiative involves longitudinal assessment of all patients in the PRRC program using a series of recovery-oriented measures of community functioning, self-reported disability, internalized stigma, Veteran satisfaction, and well-being. NEPEC program evaluation allows PRRC staff and Veteran's to assess their mental health recovery as they participate in PRRC programming, and also allows the PRRC program to directly compare treatment effectiveness to other PRRCs around the country.

Provision of Supervision and Mentorship

Postdoctoral fellows participate in year long training focused on the provision of supervision. In regular meetings, fellows have an opportunity to discuss relevant supervisory topics and also read specific articles and book chapters related to the provision of supervision, with the full fellow cohort. See **Psychology Training Handbook** for further information. Within the SMI emphasis area, fellows provide clinical supervision of practicum students and/or psychology interns. Supervision assignments are based on each fellow's expertise, and supervision can be provided for PRRC and/or inpatient group psychotherapy, individual therapy, and/or psychological assessments. Psychology fellows will be offered an opportunity to supervise one practicum student for individual supervision, for the entire training year, and supervision of practicum student dyads for several PRRC groups. As part of their supervisory experience, fellows will also have the opportunity to collaborate with PRRC staff psychologists to help write letters of recommendation and complete mid-year and end-of-year performance evaluations for practicum students.

Fellows also have the opportunity to provide mentorship of psychology practicum students. Topics typically covered during mentorship with a practicum student include internship readiness, work-life balance, and consideration of future professional opportunities. To date, our current postdoctoral fellows provide mentorship to three practicum students. In addition, postdoctoral fellows have the opportunity to receive mentorship from a DC VAMC Staff Psychologist. Topics typically covered with staff members include preparing for The Examination for the Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) and state jurisprudence exam, applying for jobs, and transitioning from a psychology fellow to an early career psychologist.

SMI fellows also have the opportunity to be integrated into the psychology training committee. As noted on page 4, the psychology training committee meets on a monthly basis. Fellows interested in being part of the psychology training committee have the unique opportunity to partner with staff to enhance the SMI fellowship training program. Moreover, fellows can choose to participate in psychology training subcommittee meetings.

Program Evaluation and Program Development

Program evaluation and development practices increase the effectiveness and efficiency of health programs by promoting objective measurement of performance and identifying opportunities for improvement and growth. In line with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and Veterans Integrated Service Network 5 (VISN 5) Strategic Plans, as well as competencies identified by the American Psychological Association, the DC VAMC Training Committee recognizes program evaluation and development practices as an important area for psychology career development and has thus incorporated these experiences into its training curriculum. Therefore, postdoctoral fellows spend 20% of their training year involved in program evaluation/development and/or research activities that are consistent with the VHA mission. See **Psychology Training Handbook** for further information.

Additional Training Opportunities

The PRRC program receives consults from staff members throughout the Medical Center. The PRRC Program Director, Dr. Zaveri, review consults and discuss, with the referring staff member, the Veteran's readiness to engage in PRRC programming. SMI fellows interested in developing their consultation/liaison skills will have the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Zaveri with discussing PRRC referrals with providers throughout the Medical Center. This opportunity will allow the fellow to interface with referring providers and attend team meetings in other clinics (e.g., Mental Health Clinic, Trauma Services Program, Inpatient Psychiatry Unit) to educate staff members on the treatment interventions available in the PRRC,

and, ultimately, ensure that Veterans are provided with the information that will help them make an informed decision regarding their mental health recovery process. Moreover, within the PRRC program, fellows have the opportunity to engage in weekly inter-disciplinary treatment team meetings with PRRC staff and Veterans to assist Veterans in their mental health recovery process. Fellows also have the opportunity to attend and actively engage in weekly national PRRC calls that discuss various programmatic and administrative topics. As the PRRC is accredited by both The Joint Commission (TJC) and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), fellows will be strongly encouraged to assist with survey accreditation preparation to develop their knowledge of national accreditation standards and associated PRRC policies and procedures.

Didactics

Fellows take part in weekly scheduled didactics that focus on health psychology, trauma, program development and evaluation, serious mental illness, and professional development. Fellows can provide didactics to psychology interns and practicum students, and they are encouraged to provide in-service trainings to PRRC on specific SMI-focused topics. See **Psychology Training Handbook** for further information regarding didactic opportunities.

Professional Disclosures from PRRC Supervisors

Dr. Galgay: I received my doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2018. My psychology externships included placements at White Plains Hospital: Child and Adolescent Services Outpatient Program, Northwell Health's Behavioral Health Program, and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Adult Outpatient Program. I completed an APA-accredited predoctoral internship at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital located in New York City. My postdoctoral fellowship was at the Washington DC VAMC and included an emphasis in Serious Mental Illness. My theoretical orientation is integrative with a focus on psychodynamic, cognitive-behavior, and multicultural therapies. I completed the VA's Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Suicide Prevention trainings, and am an active member of the Dialectical Behavior Treatment Team in coordination with providers from other clinics across the DC VAMC.

Dr. Phalen: I am a licensed psychologist with a particular interest in supporting populations that are often stigmatized by mental health professionals, such as people who meet criteria for psychotic disorders or Borderline Personality Disorder. I completed my predoctoral internship at the VA Maryland Health Care System / University of Maryland School of Medicine internship consortium, and a postdoctoral fellowship at the MIRECC of the Baltimore VA Medical Center. I have training in evidence-based cognitive/behavioral approaches to the treatment of people with chronic mental health conditions and suicidality, such as CBT for Psychosis and DBT, and I have been involved in training other clinicians in treatment approaches for serious mental illness, including Coordinated Specialty Care for early psychosis, Social Skills Training for Schizophrenia, and DBT for people with psychosis and bipolar disorder. I also have a significant interest in research. My recent/current research activities have included program evaluations of a full model DBT program in Baltimore which primarily treated patients with psychosis, a state-run health care program for people involved in the criminal justice system called "Recovery Works", and a community-led intervention against gun violence called "Baltimore Ceasefire 365."

Dr. Zaveri: I received my doctoral degree in clinical psychology from George Mason University. As a pre-doctoral extern, I worked at the George Mason University Counseling Center, George Mason University Psychological Clinic, Catholic University Counseling Center, and Loudoun County Community Based Outpatient Clinic. On internship, I worked on an inpatient unit at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital in New Jersey. I was then a post-doctoral fellow and, later, a staff psychologist in the Trauma Disorders Program at Sheppard Pratt Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. I came to work at the Washington DC

Department of Veterans Affairs in 2008. I currently work as the Program Director for the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC). I have provided clinical supervision, training, and mentoring of practicum students, interns, and postdoctoral fellows since I started working at VA. I use an integrative approach in both therapy and supervision, applying techniques from cognitive-behavior, acceptance-based, client-centered, and psychodynamic/interpersonal perspectives. During my time at VA, I have been fortunate to receive training and consultation in several evidence-based psychotherapies, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Cognitive Behavior for Depression (CBT-D, individual and group formats), Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Chronic Pain (CBT-CP), Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychosis, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Interpersonal Therapy (IPT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and Problem Solving Therapy (PST). I have also had the opportunity to receive additional training to become a Master Trainer for Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Chronic Pain and Problem Solving Therapy.

Application Procedure

The preferred method of application submission is through the APPA CAS system. Please access [APPA CAS](#) (APPIC Psychology Postdoctoral Application), a service of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). Complete the basic demographic, education, clinical training information and transcripts required of all applicants for all APPA CAS programs. APPA CAS allows you to request letters of recommendation electronically, which are then uploaded by the letter writer. In addition to APPA CAS requirements, we request brief essays as part of our application.

Eligible candidates must be U.S. citizens and must have completed a doctoral degree in Clinical or Counseling Psychology, including a doctoral internship, from APA-accredited programs. The VA is an equal opportunity employer, committed to enhancing diversity within our staff. Applicants from underserved and underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply as we are very committed to attracting a diverse class of residents, as well as in training a future generation of psychologists capable of delivering high quality care to an increasingly diverse population.

The Washington DC VAMC Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program is accredited by the APA Commission on Accreditation through 2020. The APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation can be reached at the APA, 750 First St. NE, Washington DC 20002-4242, (202) 336-5979.

Additional information about the DC VAMC Psychology Postdoctoral Fellowship Program can be found at our website: https://www.washingtondc.va.gov/departments/psychology_training_programs.asp